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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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PRESENT USE OF IMMORTALITY.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."—HEB. iv. 9.

The doctrine of a future conscious existence with the continuance of personal identity was a truth of individual hope and aspiration, among the ancient Jews, rather than an announced doctrine. It is nowhere expressly taught in the Old Testament Scripture. It formed no part of the Mosaic economy. All the threats and promises that were made of old were secular. And yet we see unmistakably in the nobler moral natures whose work or life or teachings are contained in the Hebrew Scriptures that they did expect a continued life hereafter. The annunciation of this truth belongs to a later and an advanced stage of the Jewish life. This expectation of another life has grown into what may be called a universal certainty. With the unfolding of the race it has not vanished as a shadow; it has grown. The foundations of hope are developed, and the uses thereof are multiplied in the proportion in which men are more men than when they were in a savage state.

This fact does not, to be sure, prove the existence of a continued state of being—of immortality. I do not think that desire is evidence or presumption of the existence of the thing desired; and the mere wish for continued existence is not presumptive proof of it. But where such desire exists in widening circles, and grows stronger and stronger with

SUNDAY MORNING, Oct. 11, 1874. LESSON: 2d Cor. v., 1-9; vi., 1-13. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 40, 1262, "Shining Shore."

the development of races, and becomes a deep-rooted belief in the hearts and minds of mankind, it does give fair presumption in favor of the thing desired. That is to say, where it attaches itself to reason, and the imagination, and all the noblest affections, and grows stronger as men grow larger and nobler, the universality of this desire is proof positive of the universal human sense of incompleteness without another and advanced stage of existence. It is a testimony to the incompetency of this world to fulfill that which man consciously needs. It is a testimony that the stage through which we are passing is partial and incomplete, and that judged by that sense of ideal completeness which belongs to reason—in its higher states certainly—it would seem to foreshadow a future existence. This is a kind of chrysanthemum world. In our latitudes the chrysanthemum grows all summer, begins to show its buds in October, and is cut off with frost before it is half or a quarter blossomed. The best kinds will not blossom out of doors, and need to be brought into the house, or green-house, or to be kept over in some way. And so the testimony of observation and reason in respect to this world is that men come about to the state of blossoming, or come into bud, but that their summer is not long enough here, and they do not fully come to themselves.

The great mass of the world do not, even in civilized society, really develop to the outlines that are marked in them, and that are discerned among them; and human nature, as a general thing, does not perfect itself here—certainly it does not perfect itself in any generation or in any cycle. Everything seems moving on with indications of something better than that which we attain in this life,—for the race, as a race, certainly improves. But by as much as it improves it indicates lines of yet higher development; and do they vanish? Is death that sponge which wipes life clean like a slate, or do all these indications prophesy something? I do not ask whether they demonstrate anything; I do not ask if they prove something as we prove mathematical propositions; but do they afford such a ground of expectation as comforts and satisfies the rational faculties

—the imagination, the moral sentiments, all the aspirations and all the affections? If they do, they are a kind of evidence — for evidence means a production of conviction. You can produce conviction in some minds by reasoning, and in some none at all. In some minds you can produce conviction by changing the state of feeling, by playing upon the imagination, by working through the sympathies so that the mind is convinced. I do not say that it is a rational demonstration; but by it many are led toward a better understanding of their condition in looking at the other sphere, for man needs the comfort and consolation of a future state of being. If all that is best in him with increasing intensity lifts up its hands imploringly for it, then there is in this fact, I would not say proof, but a foundation or reason for expecting it, because of its perpetual benefit; and, even if dying were going out, I would rather all my life long live strengthened and purified and inspired and comforted by more than a hope, by the belief, that I was yet again to live, and to live more gloriously; for if death is annihilation I shall not know what I have lost, while all the way down to it I reap treasures that the world is too cold to ripen—joys that can be plucked from no blossoming bough. The faith and hope of continued existence in higher conditions hereafter is of transcendent importance to the comforting of life; and I do not thank any man, even if the tapers that I have lit along my horizon are imaginary, who comes around and blows them out, and calls himself Scientist. I want the hope.

You tell me that I ought not to exercise my imagination in daily air-castle building. Do not I know perfectly well that the house that I am building every year at Peekskill is not built? I draw the plans—and that does not cost anything; I change them—and that does not cost anything; I make the rooms as large as I please—and that does not cost anything; I fill them with pictures and books and with such furniture as I want—and that does not cost anything; I imagine how the breezes will blow through the broad hall, and how the light will shine through the varied windows—and that does not cost anything; I weave fancies

as to how I shall live in that house, and what a comfort it will be to me; and shall a man come to me and say, "It is all air"? I know that, because I do not pay any bills; but is not the house a comfort to me notwithstanding? It is not nothing; it is something: it is relaxation; it is refreshment; it is joy—and I think that is what we need much of in this world.

Now if the use of the imagination is allowable in limited spheres and in familiar things, nay, if it is desirable, how much more allowable and desirable is that prophetic, that spiritual use of the imagination by which manhood is lifted out of its littleness and pigmy proportions, so that we feel ourselves to be sons of God, though it doth not yet appear what we shall be! There is grandeur in such a use of the imagination; and it is not to be extinguished, nor is it to be rebuked merely because I cannot prove it as a chemist or naturalist can prove certain physical facts.

It may be demonstrated that man, as an animal, has very little conscious need. I watch my cows and my oxen, and one of the most striking things that I observe in them is how perfectly contented they are. I have heard men refer to the animal creation as contented, and as being an example to men; but I would not be an ox for the sake of being contented. Such content as the ox has is the content of negation. There is nothing in him that is not satisfied with grass and water; and how small an animal must be whose whole nature is fed with grass and water! Are we to take our measures from stones and sticks and the lower animals, and only crave for ourselves that which nature furnishes to them? Nature gives them all that they want; but we want more, or ought to want more, being more highly organized and endowed. Men who are low want but little of the future. They want but little of to-morrow or next week. In savage life there is a want of foresight. In that life men live not in cycles of the future, but simply in days, and even hours, and scarcely enough conception have they of the extension of time and being to think to make provision in summer for the winter; but, with every step of real worthy human development approaches the consciousness of the unfitness of this

world for our whole and completed manhood. In other words, culture, evolution, development, hope, desire for after-life or of continued existence, leads not to contentment here, but to the conscious need of something more and higher.

Men who use the trained reason are conscious that there is such a thing as what scholars call *critical judgment*, and what moral philosophers call *intuitions* and *states of exaltation*, in which the ordinary processes of reasoning seem to be suppressed, and the mind flashes light forward upon the themes which it is considering. In other words, there are intimations of a higher range of reason than that which obtains among men; and all of these seem like so many elements of a higher state of existence. So that men's comfort and satisfaction are not in the ratio of the development of their reason, for the more they are developed in that direction the more consciously have they need to be yet more. The sense of incompleteness is nowhere more strongly developed in desires than in the desires of reason.

That which is true of the reason, I need not say, is true of the imagination. We are not content in the proportion in which we are endowed with that—the all-creating faculty. On the contrary, that is perpetually setting before us such ideals of character, such ideals of harmony between mind and matter, or between men and their circumstances, that nothing is more disturbing. If it be refreshing in some of its moods, yet in its higher moods, and in its association with the moral sentiments, nothing is more disturbing than the imagination. Nothing produces more yearning and craving and longing; and these are so many symptoms of the soul's homesickness for its real existence and its true abode.

Nor do we find the affections of this life to be adequate. There is always in love a brief satisfaction; but love begets a nobler idea of love, if it be true. A false love degrades, and a true love always opens a conception of loving which rebukes the actual affection. It aspires to something nobler, something higher, something richer, something that carries in it more of bounty than the ordinary

affections. There are no parents that do not feel, in proportion as they love their children, that they fain would make their love something larger and grander than it is. They feel the weakness of love as limiting them; as taking away from their power; as introducing into affection many sharp or acrid elements. They recognize the limitations of selfishness and pride as being bound around about a true affection. There is in every parent's heart a sense, an ideal, of love which he never reaches. There is something in it of joy; there is a great deal in it that is satisfactory; there is very much in it, also, of yearning, of longing for a state of which it conceives; but it does not reach to it. The inharmoniousness of man's nature with himself is perpetually developed to those who are cultured. It may not occur to a man of low growth as a philosophical fact; but as manhood increases in bulk and rises in quality, this develops toward the future, following the line of the better manhood in man. In proportion as you recede from animalism and reach to higher and higher truths—those which we all agree constitute the truest manhood—in that proportion men feel that the world does not satisfy them, that it does not come up to their idea, but that there is need of a larger atmosphere and chance for a more perfect unfolding.

The seed develops itself by growth, and man develops himself by education, and perceives that his manhood cannot be perfected in time. We find in this world that happiness is a sign of health and of moral rectitude in a lower sphere; it is true that the normal use of a faculty is usually accompanied with pleasure, and it is true that a state of health moral and physical is generally presumptive of happiness; one would naturally say, therefore, that happiness is the proper state of man. Happiness *is* the proper state of man; but it does not follow that it is his proper state in this world, by a great deal.

If you take an exquisite surgical instrument made of steel, sharp, and polished like silver, and say, "We find the perfection of steel when it is thus polished and brought into uses," that may be true; but suppose you should go into the shop where the steel was forged and made, and should say,

"There, the sign of perfect handling is perfect polish, and there is no polish here"? The final form is polish; but are all the preliminary forms likewise? When the ingot is taken, when it is thrown into the furnace, when it is brought to the anvil, when it is in its rudest forms, are not these all legitimate states? It is going on toward that state in which polish is the final form and the true indication of perfection; but all the way up to that is rude, it is coarse, it is anything but radiant.

Happiness, truly enough, in the lower spheres of human experience, is the test of health and satisfaction, and these are intimations of what are the ideal states to which men can go; but taking the race collectively and universally it is a fact that happiness is not the best thing for a man. It is a fact that those men who are born under circumstances in which they are content, who are pleased all the time, who enjoy themselves continually, are usually a very poor sort of men. Joy is *to be* our portion when we are able to bear it; but in the nascent state of existence, in all the earlier stages of development, it is found that men are made by hardship, by suffering, by hard knocks and disappointments.

I can imagine a state of existence in which men's selfishness will be trained in drill-schools in such a way that they will not need the great outer secular life; I can imagine that pride may by and by be brought under such physical and moral influences that it will run straight through from childhood to manhood in normal ways; but as man is situated now, in his low condition, such a thing is not possible. In the present state of the world men are thrown out to take their chance in life, to hope, to aspire, to endeavor, and are thrown back and thrown down. The poor and weak are thrown down so hard as to be destroyed; but if a man has the root of the matter in him he rises once more; and as he rises courage comes; and with courage comes perseverance; and with perseverance comes patience; and as he still perseveres under difficulties there comes nerve-fiber; and as the result of all these comes victory. It does not come while he is enjoying himself smelling flowers: it comes because when he sat down there was a thorn, and he jumped

up quick and went to work. It comes, not because the perfumed breeze blows upon him, but because the north wind sends icicles, winter locks up everything, and summer has to be engineer of the year. He is made to suffer because he is so narrow; because he is so little developed; because he so needs to be unfolded in every direction; because he needs to contest nature and extract from her that which shall nourish him by supplying food for his growth on every side of his being. Such are the trials which make bone and muscle and nerve in men.

We bring up our children softly—too softly, often; because not unfrequently when we turn them on the world they have not skin enough to endure that which they meet. The children of the poor have a better chance than the children of the rich, simply because they are nerved to hardship and endurance. Men who have achieved success through suffering and adversity often say, "My children shall not walk such a hard way as I walked." No, they walk a soft way, and are soft all through! Men do not understand that though for the present chastening seems to be not joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Rasping, hammering, being subjected to hot and cold, all manner of things—belong to the education which we experience in this rough world. All seems to go at hap-hazards. Men are born as nails are thrown into a keg, where they lie every which way, with heads and points against each other.

At Salisbury there was a foundry; and I remember that there for the first time I saw the way in which iron was polished. Hearing creakings and groanings, I went in and found a vast hollow wheel into which castings were thrown, a ton at a time. This wheel was revolved, and inside of it these castings were revolved; and there they crashed, and crashed, and crashed on each other; and the results of their tumblings one upon another, with nothing but the law of gravity to bring them together, was that they finally ground each other smooth, rubbed off all the rough edges, so that when they were taken out and washed a little they were bright.

The whole world is turned much in that manner, and men are tumbled together in mutual attrition. Some are ruined by it, and some are made by it. This is the order of providence, this the method of education, by which the race has been developed up to its present condition. It has been by rude raspings and conflicts that manhood has been made.

Now, pain, and sorrow, and disappointments, and discouragements seem essential to the production of higher forms of manhood in this life. Hitherto it has been so; and there is no reason why we should expect a different experience—at any rate, for vast numbers of years yet. Under such circumstances every man must feel that in this life, where he is taking the earlier forms of existence, or is being developed through them into some elements of nobler and higher manhood; where in the nature of things imperfection and rudeness reign; where violence takes the place of reason; where sorrow is the path along which men walk toward joy; where, for the hope and the joy that are set before them, men, like their Master, endure the cross, despising the shame —under such circumstances you can understand how all men may, should, look out to another life, to another stage of existence, where these things will have passed away because the necessity for them will have passed away.

In the other world we shall have learned much. We shall have become substantially different from what we are here. We shall start in our life there with a capital—with some experience. I know it is said that men have had an existence before; and when I consider the slenderness of most men, I cannot but think that if they existed before, and they accumulated anything, it must have been in a world where infinitesimals were common; still I do not know of any reason in philosophy why we may not suppose that there was a previous state of existence where human beings went from one cycle or state to another. I do not know why there may not be spheres behind us, as well as before us, though I do not see as much reason to suppose it.

Now, if the considerations which we have presented are substantially true, it is not meant, when we are exhorted to

look forward and crave that rest which remains for the people of God, to express a mere spirit of discontent. It is not a spirit of grumbling, it is not a spirit of fault-finding, it is not a spirit of charging the world with all manner of ill-luck, by any means, that is indicated in the passage which we have selected for our text. Nor is it a spirit of undervaluing the present life, present duties or present enjoyments. This is admirably expressed by that apostle of profound experience, Paul, where he says, in the passage which we read as the opening service :

"We know that if our house of this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring [what? Not to be unclothed but,] to be clothed upon."

He did not desire to get rid of, to be dispossessed of, the cares, and burdens, and trials, and wearinesses, and sorrows, of this life ; these he was willing to bear if there was good in them ; it was not that he was tired of the hardships of the present state ; it was not that he was unwilling to go into the conflict, girded, and armed with the sword ; it was not that he would be unclothed—but that he would be *clothed upon.*

There was no man that ever lived who had a higher consciousness of what manhood meant than Paul. There was never a man in every part of whose being there was such manhood, as there was in him. There will be ten Shakespeares before there will be another Paul. He was peculiar in this : that aspiration belonged to every single part of his nature. He had an exquisite sensibility to the effect of the natural world, of the civil world, and of the great spiritual world ; but his whole being sighed and longed for release, for redemption, for a higher life. He had a sense of the kingdom of God in its invisible form, and it acted upon his interior nature in such a way that every throb, every pulsation, which expressed itself in his writings, was that of a man who longed for a more complete selfhood. In speaking of himself, he says : "It is not because I am discontented." Surely he had reason to be discontented if any man had. He was in fastings, in weariness, in sickness, in betrayals among false brethren, in perils of every kind, by

sea and by land, in all manner of troubles, so that he declared himself to be as an offscouring of the earth; and yet he says, "I do not want to be delivered from all these things; I do not say that my life is done, and that I have nothing further to do; I am perfectly content to live on as long as it pleases God that I should; I would not be unclothed, but would be clothed upon; I long for myself. I am too selfish; I am too proud; I am carnal; I am narrow; I am full of prejudices; I am filled with sins; this is not myself; I have not yet got the shell off; I am moulting, and I cannot sing; my wings are not grown, and I cannot fly; but I discern in myself the intimations of a higher existence. Not that I would be unclothed and lose what I have, changing my circumstances merely, but that I would be clothed upon and gain the new joys and duties of the better life." It is a longing for perfection, for happiness, but only that happiness which is the concord of a man's whole being in himself and with his circumstances. Certainly it is not panting for indolence, though there are many who speak of entering the rest that remains for the people of God as if it were simply a cessation of enterprise and activity.

Now, there are many things which we may be permitted to long to be rid of. I can conceive that a man may be content with crippled limbs who hobbles upon crutches all his life, and sees uses and yet is conscious of being useless; and yet I could imagine that it would enter his thought of dying and of glory that he should be as others are. Nor could I blame any man for having such a thought. I can imagine one lying bedridden, or one, though not bedridden, yet moving in such feebleness and with such a shadowy life that he could do very little for others; and I could imagine that such an one might long to depart for the sake of strength and vigor. Neither would I rebuke him. I can imagine persons undergoing such drudgery that labor itself might cry out for rest. I can imagine slaves' lives and the lives of boors and peasants, as being oftentimes afflicted in such a way with excessive taxation and tasking that it might be legitimate to desire to die. I can imagine parents who long to be released from the excruciating sorrows that belong to them in the

faithful discharge of their duties in the household. I can imagine a disappointed man, such a one as Kossuth, exiled, who loves his land, and longs for the best things in its behalf, and waits, but sees no prospect in his own life of anything better; and having no other mission in this world than that of serving his own beloved country, I can imagine that he might have longings for that rest which remains for the people of God.

These things are permitted; but they are the lowest forms, they are the bottom forms, if I may so say, of desire. In our best moments we long for the rest which remaineth for the people of God because that will be our true birth. We long to know what we are; we long to know what this feeble manhood means; we see in ourselves hints and indications of it, but we are perpetually coming short. We conceive of grand things which we are incompetent to reach unto. We are full of intimations; and we get tired, at last, of this aspiration and of these thousand calls which we cannot understand, and which we cannot put away from our ears. The inhabitants of the other life stand thronging on the walls of the New Jerusalem, saying, "Come, come;" but where is the way? How shall we go? "Are ye not of us?" say that great army that is there. Who are they? The children that we carried in our arms, the companions that took sweet counsel with us day and night, fellow-laborers and warriors with us, who have gone before, and who are realizing the blessedness of emancipation—men without the animal; men with whom are no more wearinesses, no more appetites, no more passions, first for defense and afterwards for vexation, no more sordidness, no more selfishness, no more arrogance of pride, no more hindering influences that come up like mists to obscure the observations which we would make of heavenly bodies. We long for our manhood; and they are calling out to us in our highest and best hours and moods. The ear is open even if not the eye, and we almost hear the motion of sweet wings around about us of those that call us thither. It is not unmanly nor unmanning for us to yearn for that rest into which they have entered, where they have found

themselves, and where they know as they are known. They have reached the blessedness, not of perfected existence, but of that which, as compared with this earthly condition, is relatively perfect.

We long for that rest which shall set us free from inharmony—from clashing within and from clashing without. We long for release from all those experiences which, though they are needful and beneficial here, we at last hope that we have had enough of. We long to be advanced to a higher stage.

In this world we are in bondage to a thousand laws and customs which bind the good and the bad alike; which belong to society because society is made up of all sorts of people. Laws must be universal, and the same to all; and yet the very things which help men when they are low down often hinder them when they are high up. The sepal holds the rosebud while it is trying to be a bud, and protects it in winter and in the early spring; and yet, when the time comes for the rose to blossom, if that sepal is glued together, and sticks, the rose cannot blossom—the sepal will not let it out. "Chaff," we say. What is chaff? Why, it is mother's milk. It is the bosom at which wheat sucks. It is that which is wrapped around the grain, and which, while it is nascent, in milk, as we say, nourishes and supplies it with the juice by which it becomes wheat; but after it has become wheat, shall the chaff yet stick? The blossom has to perish before the apple swells, or before there can be an apple.

So, in life, we are surrounded with thousands of things which are necessary to the raising up of our generation and to the unfolding of those that have not been developed, but which have become chaff, shucks, husks, to many that are developed, so that they can lay them aside. There comes a state of existence in which they can be dispensed with safely; and men long for liberation and exaltation.

Men may long properly also for release from sorrow—not from those sufferings which are purifying, but from that greatest of all sorrows, the sight of and sympathy with universal sorrow. The whole creation groans and travails in pain until now. And how can one be like unto God, and

become sensitive and manly, and not take into consideration the condition of things that are around him?

This is qualified by hope and by faith in God. The evolution of his providence is narrowed and tempered very much; but in this world no man can be a *man* who does not bear a great deal of sorrow on account of his fellows, on account of the race; and he may well long for a state in which he shall be lifted above that necessity. The cry of the nursery at last becomes wearisome to the nurse's ears; and she has the highest longing—that which may not be expressed, and which may not even be shaped in any definite form in ourselves—the longing to be with God.

I do not think this longing ever comes in any such shape as often the catechism, theological systems, and church methods attempt to produce it. When I think of God, and try to put his attributes together in my mind, I never long to be with him. The intellectual state is one which, so long as it exists, prevents the emotive state. But there are states of emotion. There are states of imagination, of ideality, of affection. There is a large, sympathetic condition of the soul in its higher moods, in which longing for God is as when the hart pants for the water-brooks. It does not sit down and say, God is omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent, and holy and just and good; and therefore (everlasting impertinence of logic!)—therefore I long for him. Not at all. Do you suppose a mother, when she has been gone a week from her babe that she has left behind, and wants to go home, sits down and says, "My babe is so beautiful, and has such blue eyes, and such flaxen hair, and such a sweet little mouth, that I long to see it"? There is something back of all enumeration. There is something back of thoughts even. There is emotion that is itself the womb out of which thoughts come—which is the source and fountain of them all.

Now, in the soul of those who have been taught of God, and have attempted to live in Christian dispositions, there springs up a yearning and longing for God; but it is not preceded by thought, nor is it the product of thought.

It seems very strange to go back to the Psalms of David

to find the noblest expressions of this. We find them, of course, echoed and re-echoed in the New Testament; but surely, human language never was framed before nor since to express such unutterable desires of the soul toward God, in love and reverence and holy fear, as was expressed in far off ages by the warrior king.

I hear men ridicule the king and "sweet singer" of Israel, and talk about how much he was under the influence of cruel, revengeful, passionate feelings. I do not see that the men who are such critics have the capacity to understand David when he rose from lower moods and stood in the grandeur and regality of higher moods. There has never been a human soul that has given record to such a depth of experience of the very highest character, and such spiritual longing as David himself. He reached the very topmost limits of experience; and he is not to be weighed in the balance of those who are competent only to estimate his feet, but cannot rise to his heart nor to his head.

I will say, then, in closing, that the uses of the future life are those of comfort, inspiration, courage, hope. The true use of the future is to inspire patience in the present; to give men courage under difficulties; to give them inspiration and support in all the labors to which they are called.

This is the result to which the apostle himself calls us, where, in the fifteenth of first Corinthians, he closes that immortal chapter, after having argued that resurrection and immortality were established by Jesus Christ, and having gone through a long and eloquent illustration of this glorious doctrine of the future, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and when there shall be thanks to God, and shoutings throughout the universe, saying:

"My beloved brethren, be [on account of these things] steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

O ye on whom the harness girds! O ye that are tired! O ye that are heart-sick! O ye whose cup has been broken at the fountain! O ye for whom life has little left, weak,

infirm, sick, hopeless, disappointed, heart-aching folks, here is your consolation. It is but your night. The morning comes. Days hasten into weeks, and weeks into months, and months into years, and years fly swifter than the shuttle, and you are not what you seem to be. This is not all of you. Your experiences here are disciplines, the full meaning of which you cannot understand. The future lies before you unexplored by your eye, but proved and rejoiced in by thousands whom you have known. Do not be discouraged. Cast not away your confidence and hope for the future; but from that high and blessed estate (do not call it a vision), from that kingdom, from that resplendent city, from God's home and household toward which we are journeying, bring down that strength and that comfort which hope shall give you, and be cheerful; be patient; do not count yourselves unworthy of suffering. Shall the Master wear the crown of thorns, and you never know one single nettle? Shall he be cut off with ignominy, and you have no touches of sharp spears? Is the disciple better than the Master? By his sufferings what benefits have you reaped! Be content to reap more benefits from your own sufferings. Be manly and courageous and hopeful. Do not look at the grave as being a prison's mouth, and shudder and shrink from it. Do not look at sicknesses, and limitations, and weaknesses, as so many evils to be dreaded. They are all God's messengers. And the gate of death—black, is it? If you could but take the blackness from your eyes, the gate of death you would see to be the gate of pearl of which the record speaks, the most glorious of all gates. We come into life crying, poor, puling, miserable creatures; and yet all men rejoice around about us; but when, after having gathered the experience, and education, and discipline of life, we are graduated, and go out of this life, do not you suppose that they rejoice ten thousand times more, when we are born into the other life?

Go toward the gate, then, and do not call it dark. It is the way the apostles went; it is the way their Master and your Master went; it is the way of all the earth; and beyond it lies your true life, your real manhood, your best self. With the grave shall be the dust, the body which is a good servant

in poor things, but which becomes a hamper and a hindrance in the highest things; and then, having dropped that, you will soar into unknown realms in an unknown state of glory, with joy and perfectness forevermore.

There remaineth a rest for the people of God. Hungry men rush to the dinner for fear that others will eat it all up; ambitious men strive for the high offices of life for fear that others will supplant them; but there is a rest which no man can take away from you. There is a special place for each one in heaven. There is a glory for you that can hang about no other. There is a joy for you that no other can feel. Your rest remaineth, and none shall take it away from you.

So be patient; be glad; sing in sorrow; have songs in the night. When God wants you he will send for you; and when he sends for you it will be because he wants you. Then go home and be forever with the Lord.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee encouraged by the memory of the past, and comforted by all those words which thou hast strewn along the way of life. Thou hast made it easy for us to draw near to thee. Thou hast clothed thyself with all the associations of the household. Thou hast made thyself known to us by names that have in them our dearest experience. Though we cannot comprehend thee and must not think that thou art only as the best of all that we have known; though thou art transcendently more than we can imagine; though we cannot out of this limited state reach forth imagination or reason to compass thee, to take in the full conception of thy being, yet we rejoice to know in what direction thou art great, and that it is in thy disposition and not in the right hand of thine omnipotence, not in thy universal and penetrating understanding and knowledge, not in that thou hast had infinite experience in government, but in that all the resources of thy power and knowledge are in the nature of goodness, and that thou art beneficent, and art creating joy, or the conditions thereof, and preparing men even by sorrow for that higher state in which sorrow itself shall loose all its acrid elements, and ripen into sweetness and blessedness.

Now we thank thee, O Lord, that we may draw near toward thee, and that we may feel the light and warmth of thy light though we cannot take the measurement of thy being, and that we may trust ourselves implicitly in thy hand. We desire to know thy commandments; we desire with all our heart to obey thee as fully as we can. We feel our incompetency to understand, and to perfect in obedience even that which we do understand; but we strive toward a more perfect life, and from day to day seek to gain strength where we are weak, or, where strength is undue or wrong, to weaken it. We seek the things which please thee; and though we are conscious every day that we are ignorant, that we are full of infirmity, and that our infirmities constantly lead us into transgressions and sins, yet we rejoice in believing that thou art such a one as forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. Thy nature is a loving nature. Thou art not hard and stern. Thou dost not deal with hearts as thou dost with matter. Thou art lenient; and it is in thee that we have an everlasting atonement. Inherent in thy very nature is that which forever pours itself forth for us. It was made manifest in Jesus Christ; but it dwells in thee forever and forever, and is felt in the heavens and on the earth. Yea, in the infinite depths of the past eternity thou wert full of compassion for the erring. For wherefore are men weak but that so thou didst send them into life? Wherefore are men full of infirmities but that they are to progress through them to final strength and perfectness. Thou art adapted to the wants of thy creatures everywhere. Thou art full of goodness and patience. Thou dost *wait* to be gracious. More than we know, far more than we can comprehend, thou art gracious. As they that live in dungeons know not what the sun is doing that from seeds brings forth harvests, so we in darkness and doubt do not know what bounties of God evermore roll over our heads. We dwell in the midst of

benign influences which we do not discern. We are moving along lines of providence which we cannot understand. We are unable to perceive what is done in us by sorrow and trouble. In but a small measure do we know thy work. The ends thereof are far beyond our ken. O Lord our God, thou art wonder-working; thou art moving in a sphere which is infinitely higher than that in which we live or in which our thoughts do move; but we rejoice in that apprehension which we have of thee. We rejoice to think that all things work together for good to them that love thee—yea, that they work together for good to all, though that goodness is known only to them that love thee. We pray that we may with confidence repose our trust in thee for life, in death, and for the life that is to come.

And now we pray that thou wilt give us more and more the daily use of this knowledge. Grant to all those who are cumbered in life the strength and consolation which comes from the knowledge of God. Manifest thyself. Make thyself known to those who are in sorrow. Comfort those who are cast down, thou that art the Giver of all consolation and the Comforter. How many need thy offices! Pour out, we pray thee, thy bounty and thy healing spirit to hearts that are bruised. Bind up hearts that are wounded. May the suffering hear thee and feel thee. Lift up those that are overthrown. Inspire hope in those that are discouraged. If there be any to whom the way of life seems utterly empty, and whose life seems spent and run out, and who have nothing more to inspire them, open before them the life that is to come, that they may discern how great is their position there.

There is a rest which remaineth with infinite leisure above, where ages are as days are here, and which abides for all according as their souls do need. Something of it may every poor, and wretched, and racked soul be able to take unto itself now, as a foretaste and as a comfort in the troubles and trials of this life.

We pray that thou wilt enter into every household, and pour balm and consolation into every bereaved heart. We pray that thou wilt search out the hidden troubles of all, and heal them, or help them to bear them. May all who carry burdens feel the divine strength uplifting them. May those who are whelmed in disappointments be content to be disappointed if it be the will of God. Grant that hopes that, instead of blossoming, are subverted may be as the sod turned under by the plowman only that better harvests may come by and by. May men who are in trouble understand that if they wait on the Lord, ere long he will be gracious.

We pray that thou wilt teach all those who are seeking to know the truth, what it is. Teach them by the heart. Draw them unto thyself. Fill them with the spirit of divine love that they may understand thee. Teach us all to be humble, to be meek, to be long-suffering, to be patient, to be gentle, to be kind toward those that are not kind toward us. Teach us to love our enemies, and to forgive them. Teach us to bear this life not proudly and arrogantly, but humbly. Teach us not to complain as if we were worthy of better treatment than we receive. May we have such a sense of our inferiority, and humility, and worthlessness before God, that we shall

rejoice day by day that we have so many mercies, instead of complaining that we have so few. May we have better conceptions of manhood than we have had. May the ideal of truth, and honesty, and purity grow brighter and clearer to us.

Lift up the whole human race, we beseech of thee; and may justice, and peace, and love, and concord prevail among men. Save the nations from dashing insanely one against another. May wars cease, and the love of war. And we beseech of thee that thy kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness, which hath been so longed for, which hath charmed our hope so long, and which hath so long tarried, may come. Let it advance speedily. Arise, O Sun of Righteousness, with healing in thy beams; for the whole earth doth wait for thee, and is sick, is hungry, and needs thy touch of compassion, and thy wonder-working power.

And to thy name shall be the praise, both now and evermore. *Amen*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

THOU blessed Saviour, we cannot understand all thy words nor all thy life; and still less all that thou art; but we know that having loved thine own thou dost love them unto the end. We know that thou art gone before to prepare for us what thou didst declare upon earth to be in thy father's house—many rooms and apartments. There is one for us, and thou didst go to prepare it, and we rejoice in it.

We rejoice that thou hast entered into thy rest. No more art thou a man of sorrows, though thou art still acquainted with grief. Thou art lifted above the scoff and the scowl of those that persecuted thee, and thou art in resplendent glory, not for thine own self, not for thine own indulgence, but that thou mayest with might, and power, and everlasting activity and love, mould and bring up to perfection thy creatures that are here upon earth. We thank thee for thy care of us. We thank thee for all our gladness that has been good. We thank thee for all our sorrows. Thou hast not put the flail upon us once too much. The grain was in the straw, and it would have remained there if thou hadst not beaten it out. Thou hast made us suffer for our good, that we might be partakers of thy holiness. May we not be unwilling to be chastised. May we wish to be chastised if it is chastisement that we need to carry us up. We beseech of thee that thou wilt love us still, and do the things which love inspires. Take away anything from us which is hindering us, and send anything upon us that is necessary to our development, however heavy it may be to be borne. Thy yoke thou canst make easy, and thy burden thou canst make light.

Thus we pray that thou wilt be our School-master here, and by and by our exceeding great Reward in heaven. And in thy presence we will give the praise of our salvation to Thee, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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